

Chocolate tasting

"All our senses are given to us to enjoy, and to praise God." – QF&P 21.24

SIGHT: Check for high **shine**, even colouring and a smooth, unblemished surface. Strong shine reflects a well-tempered chocolate. If the chocolate is dusty, or ashy-white, this may be a condition known as chocolate "bloom" (the chocolate was exposed to temperature and humidity extremes and has become untempered).

TOUCH: Should be firm. Fine chocolate should not feel greasy, grainy, sticky or waxy. When you touch fine dark chocolate it should hold its shape a **few seconds** before melting.

SOUND: Break the chocolate and note the sound: is it soft, hard, dull, quick? Fine chocolate breaks cleanly, creating crisp edges without crumbling, and makes a sharp sound. This snap is called the ***craquant***. The darker the chocolate, the snappier the sound.

SMELL: Cup your sample in your hands and breathe in. What are the first notes? Are they mild or strong? Are they roasted, nutty, floral or fruity? Sweet or sour? Do you think of vanilla, spice or tobacco? **Rub** a tiny piece between your thumb and index finger until the chocolate softens: this warms the chocolate and releases more aromas. Smell a second time and take note of the new layers of flavours.

Thanks to www.allchocolate.com



TASTE: Take a small portion of the chocolate and place it in the centre of your tongue.

- Allow it to **melt**. Notice the meltpoint. Does it melt quickly or slowly?
- Once it begins to melt, place your tongue on the roof of your mouth and move the melting chocolate around in a circular motion. Be sure to **coat** your entire tongue.
- (You will experience different flavour **stages**. Each chocolate has its very own beginning, middle and finish.) At first, you may notice a tartness, bitterness or sourness, followed by fruitiness.
- Note the **texture**: is this chocolate smooth, uneven, or grainy? Velvety, silky, thin, creamy, waxy?
- Become aware of how new flavours emerge. Do you taste something floral? Herbal? Like honey? Like brandy?
- As that subsides, soft tannins take over, bringing in new notes that culminate in the finish, a **drying sensation** combined with the last sugar notes.
- How complex are the flavours? Do they seem multi-dimensional, and multi-layered? Or **simple**?
- Finally, note how **long** the flavour lingers. Premium chocolate has flavour that lasts.

Oxford Young Friends chocolate tasting & (informal) business meeting, 5 May 2010

TASTING NOTES:

Montezuma 73% : _____

Divine 70% : _____

Sainsbury's Fairtrade Santo Domingo 70% : _____

Bournville Classic dark : _____

Oxford Nibchoc (26% cacao nibs) : _____

EVENTS IDEAS SO FAR:

1. **Picnic** and outdoors Meeting for Worship. We could maybe do this in the Meeting House garden, or could go further afield. (Matthew Gee's idea)
2. Meeting with other Quaker **age groups** (Nadia emailed some of us about this on 16 March)
3. Watching any or all of the six DVDs by Don Cuppitt (**Sea of Faith**, 1984)
4. **Board games** from Friends House/Woodbrooke, such as: Quaker Circle, Quaker Life boundaries game (£5)
5. An exercise about Advices & Queries that hasn't been tried out yet: talking about what additions we might make, imagining that we had that choice - writing a kind of **apocrypha** (Naomi's idea)
6. A stall at the **Cowley Road Carnival**, Sunday 4 July, www.cowleyroadcarnival.co.uk
(idea from Meeting for Worship for Business, 2 May)
7. **Trips** outside Oxford, such as:
 - a. Friends House in London - including the new Quaker Centre, open Monday to Thursday 8-8, Friday 8-5, and Saturday 9-4
 - b. Attending Yearly Meeting together, 28-31 May in London
 - c. Kendal's Quaker tapestry (Matt Godwin's idea)
 - d. Swarthmore Hall / Pendle Hill
 - e. Maison Quaker de Congénies, in southern France - our Meeting has just befriended them formally, and they have cheap accommodation; it's seven or eight hours from Oxford to Congénies
8. **Anything else** you might think of! This is the biggest category.

From the website: Nosebag (13 May, 6:15 for 6:45), 'The Iron Wall' (3 June, 7:30), Social events (17 June, 15 July), YFGM (25-27 June, Norwich), Headington Meeting (June/July)